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FM AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4978  
INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE  
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA IMMEDIATE  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANTANANARIVO 000595

SIPDIS

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ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU - AMBASSADOR COURVILLE  
NSC FOR DIRECTOR PITTMAN  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/14/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [EAID](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [ASEC](#) [CN](#)  
SUBJECT: COMOROS ELECTION POSTPONED AS BACAR SEIZES POWER

REF: A. SIBLEY - RAINEY TELCON 6/14

[1](#)B. ANTANANARIVO 585 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires George N. Sibley for reasons 1.4B,D

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Shortly after inaugurating himself "President" of Anjouan on the morning of June 14, Colonel Mohamed Bacar resumed his position at the presidential palace. A high-level Comoran delegation will arrive in Addis Ababa June 14 to lobby the African Union (AU) to hold an extraordinary session of the Peace and Security Council, likely seeking to expand the AU forces' mandate in the Comoros to include military options. The Ministry of External Affairs formally confirmed the widely held expectation that the Anjouan elections rescheduled for June 17 will not be held until June 24 at the earliest. The two U.S. officers slated to observe elections in Anjouan will therefore stay in Antananarivo for the time being. END SUMMARY.

BACAR RE-INAUGURATES HIMSELF "PRESIDENT"

[1](#)2. (SBU) Shortly after inaugurating himself "President" of Anjouan on the morning of June 14, Colonel Mohamed Bacar resumed his position at Anjouan's presidential palace. Contacts in Anjouan report Bacar is open to negotiating with the Union Government on issues such as free travel of Comoran citizens between the islands, as long as talks do not include the legitimacy of his presidential seat.

JUNE 17 ELECTIONS POSTPONED AGAIN

[1](#)3. (SBU) A high-level Comoran delegation composed of Vice President Idi Nadhoim, Minister of External Relations Ahmed Ben Said Jaffar, and Chief of Cabinet at the Ministry of Defense Commandant Bastoi are expected to arrive in Addis Ababa June 14 to lobby the AU to hold an extraordinary session of the Peace and Security Council. Post believes the delegation, slated to stay in Addis Ababa through June 20, will ask the AU to expand its mandate in the Comoros to include military options should Bacar's forces refuse entry to AU forces seeking to secure elections. Post has informed

Ambassador Courville's staff in Addis Ababa of Vice President Idi's visit should she wish to meet with the delegation (REF A).

14. (SBU) Senior Union Government officials remained in intense meetings with Union President Sambu throughout the day. Separately, UNDP Resident Representative Opiak Kuma and the Director of the Gendarmes in Moroni indicated near certainty there would be no elections on Anjouan on June 17 as the airport in Anjouan is closed, and the situation there remains unstable. This decision was confirmed officially by the Ministry of External Relations, which announced the next elections to be June 24. These will include the run-off elections on Grande Comore and Moheli, as well as the first round elections -- if possible -- on Anjouan. Should the Anjouan elections be held, Bacar will no longer be allowed to run.

15. (SBU) Charge Sibley ordered the two U.S. officers slated to observe elections in Anjouan to stay in Antananarivo for the time being given the cancellation of elections in Anjouan June 17. Embassy Antananarivo still intends to send at least two U.S. Embassy observers to Moroni for the second round of elections on Grande Comore June 24.

16. (C) COMMENT: With Bacar back in the presidential palace, some Comoran citizens are starting to question the credibility of President Sambu and his Union Government. The 16 losing candidates in Grand Comore's presidential elections are reportedly threatening to boycott the second round of elections June 24 if President Sambu is unable to resolve problems in Anjouan. Residents of Anjouan complain the Union Government does not care for them, while some residents of Moheli and Grande Comore are accusing Sambu of either

ANTANANARI 00000595 002 OF 002

incompetence or complicity with Bacar. From our perspective, Sambu does not lack the will to confront Bacar, but he does lack the means to wrest control from an armed force defending a small island. Bacar has thrown the future of the Union of the Comoros into question and challenged the will and the ability of the international community to provide a timely resolution. END COMMENT.

SIBLEY